

The Weather of 2008

Wetter than normal everywhere; wettest on record at Shannon Airport

Annual rainfall totals were above normal everywhere and it was the wettest year for between six and 22 years generally, while Shannon Airport's total of 1270mm was the highest at the station since it opened in 1945. The distribution of rainfall over the year was very uneven; after a relatively dry spring, there followed a spell of very wet weather between late May and mid-September. The summer period of June, July and August was exceptionally wet for the second year running and it was the wettest summer at Dublin Airport for 50 years. The summer also brought the heaviest daily falls, leading to flooding in many parts of the country. Shannon Airport measured its highest-ever hourly fall when 38mm was recorded during a thunderstorm on August 6th, while the year's highest daily value of 102mm was measured at Belderrig, Co. Mayo, on August 13th. January and October were also exceptionally wet months in the west of the country. The annual number of wetdays (days with 1mm or more rainfall) was also above normal everywhere, by between 10% and 20% generally; there were between 140 wetdays at Casement Aerodrome and 234 at Knock Airport.

Mean air temperatures for the year were around half a degree above normal for the 1961-90 period at most stations, but it was nevertheless the coolest year for between six and 14 years generally. The mean temperature for most months was around half a degree higher than normal, but May was the warmest on record at most stations, with mean temperatures over three degrees above normal in western areas. Mean temperatures were below normal generally in October and December, while they were around normal in June and September. The highest temperatures of the year were recorded during the last week of July in most places, but Birr's maximum was recorded as early as May 12th. Most stations measured their lowest air temperatures on January 4th, but there were also some very low values recorded during mid-February and late December. The total number of air frosts during the year of between 32 and 46 at inland stations was a little lower than normal generally.

Annual sunshine totals were close to normal everywhere. The sunniest months relative to normal were February, April, May, June, October and December, while January, July and August were dull; percentage of normal sunshine values for August were only around 60% in places, making it the dullest on record in places. Most stations measured their sunniest day of the year during May.

Mean windspeeds for the year of between 7 and 12 knots generally (*13 and 22km/h*) were above normal everywhere, the highest annual values for between 6 and 9 years. Malin Head recorded the highest gust of the year, 91 knots (*168km/h*) on January 9th, the highest gust at any station since December 1998.

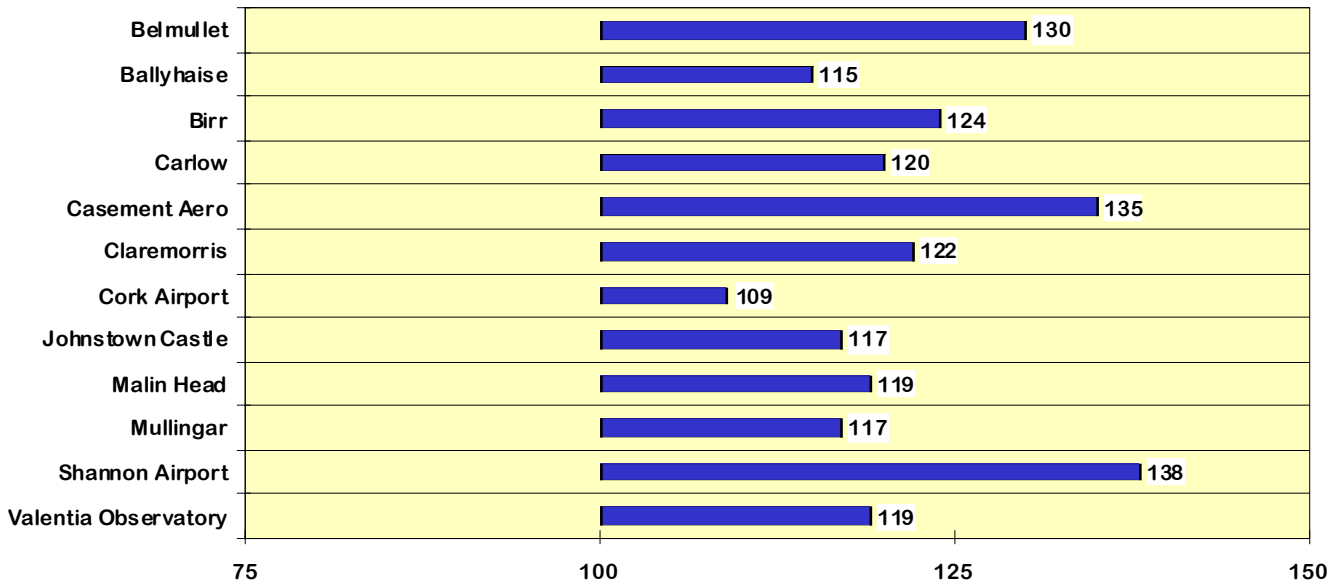
According to provisional figures released by the World Meteorological Organisation, the global mean temperature for 2008 is estimated at 0.31°C above the 1961-1990 annual average of 14.0°C, making this the tenth warmest year since the beginning of the instrumental climate record in 1850. The ten warmest years on record globally have all been observed since 1995.

Extreme values

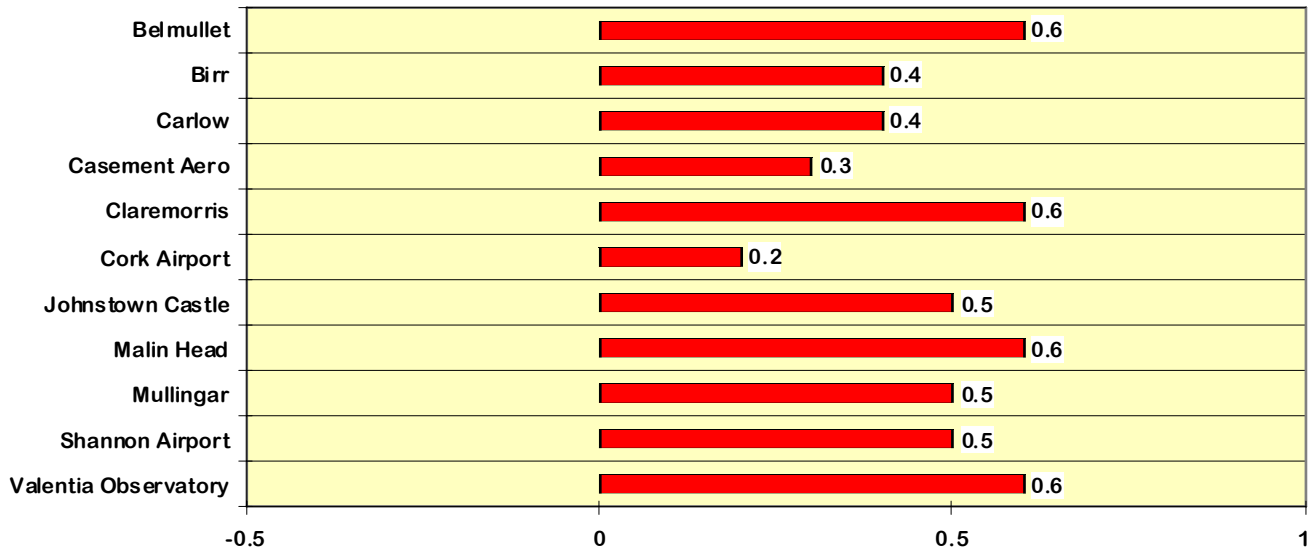
Rainfall	Highest annual total: 1673mm at Valentia Observatory Lowest annual total: 944mm at Dublin Airport (<i>its wettest year since 2002</i>) Highest daily rainfall: 102mm at Belderrig, Co. Mayo, on August 13th
Temperature	Highest mean annual temperature: 11.1°C at Valentia Observatory Lowest mean annual temperature: 8.7°C at Knock Airport (<i>its coolest year since 2001</i>) Highest temperature: 25.2°C at Shannon Airport on July 24th Lowest air temperature: -7.7°C at Casement Aerodrome on February 19th (<i>its lowest value since March 2001</i>) Lowest grass minimum temperature: -12.8°C at Birr on February 17th and 18th
Sunshine	Highest annual total: 1512 hours at Dublin Airport Lowest annual total: 1249 hours at Birr Highest daily sunshine: 15.3 hours at Malin Head on May 26th

Year 2008 Percentage / Difference from 1961-90 monthly normals

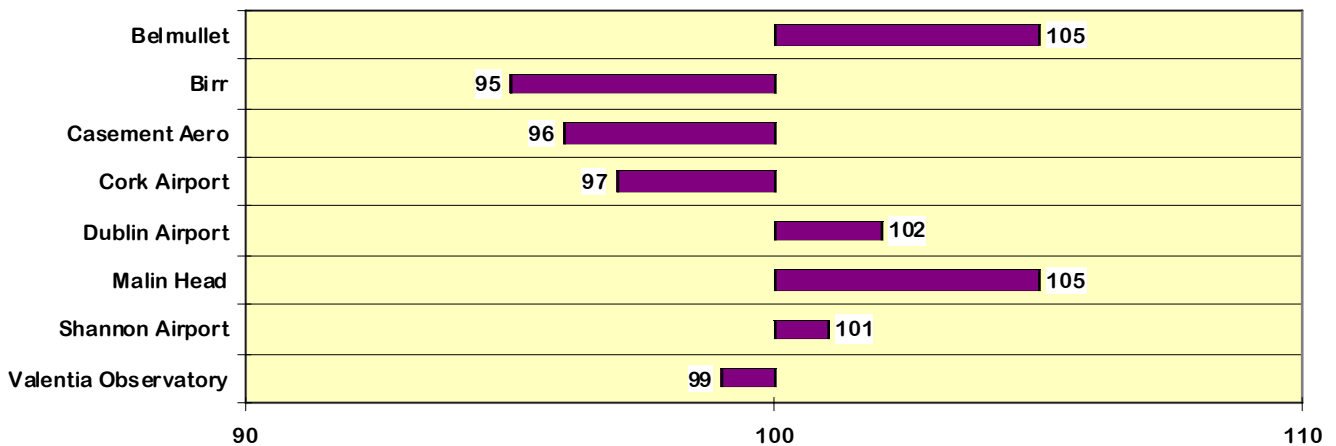
Rainfall (% of normal for period 1961-1990)



Temperature (°C difference from normal for period 1961-1990)



Sunshine (% of normal for period 1961-1990)



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 This report is based on preliminary data from the synoptic weather stations operated by Met Éireann

A detailed summary is available in the **Monthly Weather Bulletin**

For more information, contact Met Éireann at 01-8064200 or e-mail: climate.enquiries@met.ie website: www.met.ie/climate